

generations of service to your country and for being an example to all of us.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity yesterday to share with Dana, his wife, his mom and step-dad and hear the staff talk about Damon. It was clear that Damon had created a family, that they loved him, that they respected him as a professional, and that his leadership was evident across this entire exchange. It was heartwarming to hear those stories about Damon and the way he led the staff of the committee.

We will miss him. I ask our Nation to continue to pray for his wife and family as they walk this dark path, knowing that he made this world a better place to live and that he helped mightily across a long period of time to help protect us from some really bad folks.

We love you, Damon Nelson, and we will miss you.

#### AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, this is American Education Week, and I rise to honor and thank the teachers and school administrators who have dedicated their lives to ensure our future generations are stronger than ever.

There are over 50 million kids in our public schools today. Back in 2015, before the Every Student Succeeds Act was signed into law, the Federal approach to education relied heavily on standardized testing to measure academic achievement. While I understand the importance of testing to measure academic growth from year to year, there should be a number of indicators for evaluating academic success and improvement for both schools and students.

After that bill passed in 2015, the goal shifted from teaching children more efficiently to inspiring lifelong learning in students. I applaud educators for embracing this goal, and I am hopeful that this approach will better prepare millions of students for the challenges that await them in life and in the workforce.

While on the subject of Federal education, we cannot avoid the debate over the amount of taxpayer money we send to schools throughout the country. There is and always will be bipartisan agreement that we should make sure schools have the resources they need in order to be successful. But in the coming appropriations cycle, and in future ones, we must also remember that additional spending does not necessarily improve student performance. This has been proven time and time again, Mr. Speaker.

One data point I would refer folks to is high school graduation rates, which have remained stagnant since the 1970s. What we have seen is very unfortunate: the system continues to grind forward, with costs going up each year and our

efficiency going in the opposite direction.

I will continue to fight for education reforms aimed at improving resource allocation and boosting student performance. Recognizing the shortfalls within our K–12 education may not be a popular talking point, but I think it is worth emphasizing the need to act responsibly and address the problems students, parents, and educators face.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close by saying two things. The first is a simple thank you to the teachers, including those teachers in my own family, who have dedicated their life to serving students. Your hard work does not go unnoticed. The second thing is that I will work hard to improve our education system for students in my district and around the country.

#### CITY OF DAVID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last month, I was privileged to stand in the city of David, the site of ancient Jerusalem.

Just a few feet from the Western Wall, the city of David is the place where Jerusalem began. It is a place I have regularly visited over the past few years, joined by my fellow Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike.

I can think of no better place than the city of David to express that the United States knows what the Jewish people have known for 3,000 years: Jerusalem is the historic capital of Israel.

This reality was reinforced when the United States correctly relocated our Embassy to Jerusalem earlier this year. I call upon more countries to do the same.

The historic bond is evidenced by the incredible discoveries that are being unearthed in the archeological excavations throughout the city of David. These excavations affirm the millennia-old connection of the Jewish people to Jerusalem not as a matter of faith, but as a matter of historical fact, despite UNESCO's ongoing, shameful efforts to declare otherwise.

Among the most significant discoveries presently being unearthed in the city of David is the ancient pilgrimage road. Built over 2,000 years ago, the pilgrimage road, running from the Pool of Siloam at the southern tip of the city of David to the footsteps of the Western Wall and Temple Mount, served as the main thoroughfare of the Second Temple Jerusalem. Millions of people joined together to ascend to the temple during the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

Both the pilgrimage road and the Pool of Siloam have deep significance to Jews and Christians alike. It holds profound meaning to countless millions of Americans. Antiquities discov-

ered along the pilgrimage road tell the story of both the vibrant culture of the Second Temple period Jerusalem and the devastating destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans, which ended tragically in the year 70 C.E.

In the future, visitors of all faiths and backgrounds will be able to walk this route of their ancestors, upon the very flagstones as their ancestors 2,000 years ago.

In the Givati parking lot excavation, another excavation in the city of David, 10 layers of ancient Jerusalem civilization dating back some 2,700 years have been uncovered. The layers include Jewish, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Muslim, Crusader, and Ottoman. So each visitor to the city of David can truly say: "I also have a connection to Jerusalem."

In this very excavation, as you can see in this poster, in a structure dating back 2,500 years to the Biblical First Temple period in Jerusalem, a seal with ancient Hebrew writing was found. I have a replica of that seal in my office, which was presented to me in a meeting I had with Ze'ev Orenstein, a representative from the city of David, together with my colleague, Congressman ELIOT ENGEL. On the seal was the name Eliana, daughter of Ga'el. I can't even begin to describe my emotions when I learned that a seal with almost my very own name was found in the city of David.

I, like countless Americans, feel a deep, personal connection to Jerusalem, her history, her heritage, and her holiness.

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In fact, it is only over the last 51 years of Israel's sovereignty in Jerusalem that people of all faiths and all backgrounds have enjoyed freedom of access and worship at their holy sites, whether they are Christians, whether they are Jewish, whether they are Muslims. Such freedoms cannot be taken for granted in the Middle East where, with the very exception of Israel, the only democracy in the region, they are not easy to find.

During the nearly 3 decades that I have had the honor of serving this wonderful institution, support for Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish State of Israel has been bipartisan, and I call on my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in the coming Congress to ensure that that never changes, to ensure that the historic bond between the Jewish people and Jerusalem remains undeniable.

Together with millions of Americans, I salute the work of the City of David Foundation and especially my friend Ze'ev, who did not even want me to mention him—tough—in uncovering our shared history in Jerusalem, making it accessible to all of us who want to experience these discoveries for themselves.

So congratulations to Ze'ev—I have said it again—for the discoveries at the City of David. Many more to come.

# HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF PETTY OFFICER JAMES ELLIOTT WILLIAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and it is such an honor to recognize the official renaming of the United States Post Office located at 201 Tom Hall Street in Fort Mill, South Carolina, as the J. Elliott Williams Post Office Building.

James Elliott Williams was born in Fort Mill, South Carolina, and lived an extraordinary life. Mr. WILLIAMS was in the United States Navy for 20 years and served in and during the Cold War, the Korean war, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Vietnam war.

One example of his heroic actions occurred during the Vietnam war where he and his men fought off enemy combatants behind enemy lines for 3 hours in south Vietnam. Under Petty Officer Williams' leadership, the American Naval force killed roughly 1,000 Vietcong guerillas, destroyed over 60 vessels, and disrupted a major enemy logistics operation.

James E. Williams retired on April 26, 1967, as the most highly decorated enlisted sailor in the history of the United States Navy. He was the recipient of multiple awards during his service in the Navy; including, the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Korean Service Medal, and the United Nations Service Medal. Additionally, during his last 7 months in the Navy, he received every sea service award for heroism.

On May 14, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in the name of Congress, presented James Elliott Williams the Medal of Honor. In the 20th century, three sailors of American Indian heritage received the medal. Petty Officer Williams was one of the three.

Mr. Speaker, it was my great privilege to put forward this legislation with the entire South Carolina delegation and have it signed into law to honor the life, service, and sacrifice of James Elliott Williams.

## HURRICANE MICHAEL AFTERMATH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, just over a month ago, Hurricane Michael, the third most powerful hurricane to ever make landfall on the United States mainland, ravaged areas of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Hundreds of Americans lost everything, and more than 30 people were killed.

Hurricane Michael appears to have done its worst in Panama City, Florida, and nearby areas, but Alabama's Second District was also badly impacted in several counties in the Wiregrass Region. In fact, Hurricane Michael is the most powerful storm to

ever hit Houston County, according to recorded history.

In my district, the agricultural community faces the most significant devastation. While the full scale of the damage to local agriculture is still being assessed, Hurricane Michael dealt a terrible blow to our cotton, timber, and peanut farmers.

In the aftermath of the storm, I traveled to the Wiregrass several times to be with our farmers and to see firsthand what they were experiencing. The devastation is heartbreaking, to say the least. The farmers in southeast Alabama are in the midst of a very real crisis.

In Alabama's Second District, agriculture is the backbone of our economy. Throughout my time in Congress, I have made it a priority to fight for our farmers of all commodities. Their work to provide the food and fiber we depend on is vitally important. I will continue to advocate for them, especially during this time of uncertainty, as we work to put the pieces back together for these hardworking men and women who have suffered tremendous loss to their livelihoods.

Mr. Speaker, I want the people I represent to know that my office stands ready to help during this challenging time. I will work with my colleagues here in Congress to provide the proper resources and assistance to our farmers. We must get this right, and we must ensure Alabama's farmers are included in all recovery efforts.

I encourage anyone in Alabama's Second District who needs assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael to contact one of my offices today. My staff and I work for you, and we are committed to ensuring that the folks impacted know the options available to them.

As we work through this season of rebuilding, I have been encouraged to see and hear about so many acts of kindness and charity in our district and throughout the Southeast. This time of recovery will not be easy, but if we continue to help each other in whatever ways we are able, we will get through this together.

## PAYING TRIBUTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, as I near the end of my 30 years in the Congress, it is only natural to reminisce just a bit.

During my first term in the House, a roving photographer for Roll Call stopped me to ask a sort of humorous question. He asked: If there was a statue of you in the Capitol, where would it be and what would it say? I said: It would probably be in the basement, and it would say: Lucky to be here.

I have always felt very lucky to have this job, and everyone on both sides of the aisle have been very kind to me. But I want to pay tribute this morning

to the three people most responsible for me being here.

A friend of mine in Knoxville told me a few years ago that I won the lottery with parents. I had never thought of it in that way, but it is true. My grandparents in Scott County, Tennessee, were wonderful people, but they had no money, 10 kids, an outhouse, subsistence farm—pure Appalachia.

My dad hitchhiked into Knoxville with \$5 in his pocket to go to the University of Tennessee and worked his way through. Twenty years after coming to Knoxville, he was elected mayor and led the peaceful integration of our city. He got about 95 percent of the African American vote in three non-partisan races for mayor.

He then preceded me in Congress, serving 23½ years and becoming the ranking Republican on the Ways and Means Committee. A former Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania told me one time: Your dad was the only man I knew who never had an enemy in this town.

I once described my father as the kindest, sweetest, toughest, hardest working man I ever knew, and I meant tough in a good way. I got a really nice handwritten letter from Peyton Manning about that article. He said he had flown out of Knoxville the day it was in the paper and that he could tell from that article that I had the same kind of relationship with my dad that he has with his.

My mother was 2 years older than my father and, after college in Iowa, came to Knoxville to visit an older sister who had married an engineering graduate from the University of Iowa and who had gotten a job at TVA. Her sister talked her into staying, and she met my dad at a YWCA dance.

Dad told one of his brothers that night that he had met the woman he was going to marry, and 3 months later, in Iowa City, Iowa, they were married, in May of 1942. The odds against a farm boy from Tennessee meeting and marrying a girl from Iowa City must have been billions to one, but theirs was truly a marriage made in heaven.

No one ever loved me as much as my mother did, and several times I have told women from the Midwest that I have a very high opinion of women from that part of the country because I thought my mother was the sweetest woman in the world.

My wife, Lynn, was a waitress in Knoxville's finest restaurant when I met her. She later said she married me even though I gave her the lowest tips of any of her regular customers.

Lynn has been my strongest supporter and biggest critic, my number one adviser. I honestly believe, if she had been elected to Congress instead of me, she would have gone much further than I have. She is certainly the speaker of our house and the love of my life for more than 40 years.

During my 30 years in Congress, I was in Washington a lot and gone a lot,